

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Review of Literature

1. Popular Literature

Popular literature has become a legitimate and relevant approach in analyzing literary works that are produced and consumed on a mass scale. This approach allows scholars to understand how popular texts fulfill the emotional and social expectations of readers while reflecting the dominant cultural values of a given time. Scaggs (2005) explains that crime fiction openly displays its plot elements and narrative structures. This perspective provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how popular texts can be analyzed as structured narratives. This perspective highlights that popular narratives can be examined not only as entertainment but also as meaningful cultural texts that reflect social values and audience engagement.

Recent academic discussions further reinforce the legitimacy of popular literature as an object of literary analysis. Maina (2024) argues that popular culture deserves literary analysis because it reveals the cultures, beliefs, and practices of its audience. Similarly, Vishniac (2018) highlights that twenty-first-century popular fiction is a significant field of study because it covers a wide range of genre texts that have shaped the contemporary literary market and gained strong cultural influence over the past two decades. These perspectives support the view that popular literature is not merely mass entertainment but a cultural text that can be systematically analyzed to reveal

structural patterns and social meanings.

This framework has been effectively applied in various literary and film studies. Wijaya et al. (2023) analyzed the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series through a formula approach and found that the films use familiar adventure patterns, including hero-villain conflict, quest, action, setting, battle, and happy ending. Similarly, Merawati and Astuti (2019) applied formula theory to examine popular Islamic novels in Indonesia, including *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa*. They found that these novels share popular formulas in their themes, characters, settings, and cultural elements, with religion, especially Islam, appearing as a central element in the stories. Therefore, the use of popular literature as an analytical lens is not only valuable for identifying textual structures but also for understanding the socio-cultural functions of popular narratives. This perspective serves as a foundational framework for the current study in exploring the narrative formulas embedded in contemporary popular fiction.

2. Formula Analysis in Detective Fiction

Formula analysis in popular literature is commonly used to examine recurring patterns and structures that shape genre-based narratives. In the context of detective fiction, these patterns are closely related to genre conventions that organize how stories present crime, investigation, and resolution. Scaggs (2005) explains that detective fiction operates through recognizable structural elements that guide audience expectations while allowing flexibility and variation across different texts. This perspective

allows detective stories to be analyzed as structured narratives without relying on rigid or fixed narrative stages.

Based on the detective fiction framework proposed by Scaggs (2005), this study applies formula analysis to examine the narrative structure of *Enola Holmes* (2020). Through this framework, the study explores whether *Enola Holmes* (2020) maintains conventional detective fiction patterns or modifies them through a contemporary, female-centered narrative perspective. To provide a clearer analytical framework, these structural conventions are further categorized into several key elements that define the structure of detective fiction according to Scaggs (2005).

a. Scaggs' Concept of Detective Fiction

In detective fiction, stories are constructed through a set of recognizable genre conventions that shape how mysteries are presented and resolved. Rather than following rigid narrative stages, detective fiction relies on recurring elements that allow audiences to identify the genre while still accommodating variation across different texts. Scaggs (2005) explains that crime fiction can be identified through recognizable plot elements, narrative structures, devices, codes, and conventions.

These conventions function as a flexible formula that guides the organization of detective stories. While the basic structure remains familiar to audiences, individual works may modify or emphasize certain elements to reflect contemporary themes, character perspectives,

or social values. In this way, detective fiction maintains continuity with traditional genre expectations while remaining adaptable to new narrative contexts. This concept is particularly relevant for analyzing modern detective films that feature alternative detective figures, including female protagonists.

b. Elements of Detective Fiction According to Scaggs (2005)

Detective fiction is widely recognized as a genre that is structured around the gradual revelation of a mystery through investigation. Rather than dividing detective stories into rigid narrative stages, Scaggs (2005) discusses detective fiction through recurring conventions such as crime, investigation, detective figures, clues, and resolution. Based on these conventions, this study organizes the analysis into five analytical elements. These elements function as a flexible formula that guides the construction of detective plots while allowing variation in character portrayal and thematic emphasis. Detective fiction is constructed through several key structural elements, which include:

1) Crime or Mystery

The crime or mystery serves as the central disturbance that initiates the plot. According to Scaggs (2005), detective fiction is structured around two connected stories: the crime itself and the investigation that follows it. This element provides the main problem that must be solved and motivates the progression of events throughout the story.

2) Detective Figure

The detective figure is the character responsible for uncovering the truth behind the crime or mystery. According to Scaggs (2005), the detective figure is commonly portrayed as a reasoning and observing character who solves the mystery through logical attention to clues. This figure plays a central role in guiding the plot through observation, reasoning, and deduction.

3) Investigation Process

The investigation is the process by which a detective gathers, examines, and connects clues. According to Scaggs (2005), the investigative process in detective fiction involves the use of clues, analytic and deductive abilities, data collection, and rational logical analysis to solve the mystery. This element structures the plot development by revealing information gradually and directing the audience toward possible explanations.

4) Clues and Suspense

Clues are strategically presented throughout the plot to maintain suspense and allow the audience to engage with the mystery-solving process. According to Scaggs (2005), clues play an important role in detective fiction by providing the information necessary for the reader to solve the mystery. This element supports the logical progression of the investigation while sustaining reader or viewer interest.

5) Resolution

The resolution marks the conclusion of the plot, in which the mystery is explained and narrative order is restored. According to Scaggs (2005),

detective fiction moves toward a conclusion and resolution in which the mystery is ultimately explained. This element provides closure by clarifying the meaning of the clues and revealing the outcome of the investigation.

These structural elements form the foundation of detective fiction as a genre and function as a flexible plot formula rather than fixed stages. In contemporary detective films, these elements may be modified to reflect modern social contexts and alternative character perspectives. In this study, Scaggs' (2005) framework is applied to analyze how *Enola Holmes* (2020) constructs its detective plot, particularly through the portrayal of Enola as a young female detective who may modify conventional detective fiction expectations.

B. Review of Relevant Research

Popular formula studies have been widely to examine how detective narratives maintain recognizable structures while adapting to contemporary contexts. Purnami et al. (2025) investigated the implementation classic detective formula in Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. The study found that the novel follows the six structural stages of Cawelti's detective formula, including the introduction of the detective, crime and clues, investigation, announcement of the solution, explanation of the solution, and denouement. The findings also highlight how the classical structure can be modernized through a teenage detective protagonist and the inclusion of contemporary storytelling forms such as interview transcripts and emails. This study is

relevant because it confirms that formula remains applicable to contemporary detective narratives and supports the idea that modern works may preserve core structures while adding innovations.

Several studies have demonstrated how literary formulas are adapted and modified to align with contemporary contexts and audience expectations. Fadhila and Adi (2021) conducted a qualitative study formula analysis to examine Tana French's Dublin Murder Squad series within hard-boiled detective conventions. The study aimed to analyze how female detectives reshape traditionally masculine detective narratives. The findings revealed that the author maintains the typical detective formula while introducing a complex female protagonist who challenges masculine roles and patriarchal control. This study is relevant because it demonstrates how detective fiction formulas can be maintained while being transformed through gender representation.

Another relevant study was conducted by Sartika (2022) conducted a descriptive qualitative analysis of Agatha Christie's short story *The Third-Floor Flat* by applying Cawelti's detective formula theory. The study aimed to examine how the structure of classical detective fiction is constructed through the story's plot and suspense-building techniques. The findings showed that the narrative follows a clear detective formula, including the preliminaries, plot development, intentional misleading, crime revelation, investigation by several parties, failure of other characters, and the detective's final presentation of facts and proof. This study is relevant because it supports the idea that detective fiction formulas can remain recognizable while adapting to modern narrative

styles.

Recent scholarly works further emphasize the relevance of formula analysis as a methodological approach in studying popular texts. Wijaya et al. (2023) used a descriptive formula analysis to examine the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series. Their study shows that the films share similar adventure formulas, such as hero-villain conflict, quest, action, setting, and happy ending, while still adding slight differences to make the series feel fresh and interesting. This study is relevant because it supports the use of formula analysis as a systematic approach for uncovering structural patterns in popular films.

Purnami et al. (2025) conducted a qualitative study using Cawelti's formula theory to analyze contemporary popular fiction. The study aimed to identify how modern narratives preserve conventional formulaic structures while introducing innovations suited to contemporary contexts. The findings showed that contemporary works continue to maintain core formulaic patterns despite modifications in characterization and narrative presentation. This study is relevant because it demonstrates that formula analysis remains applicable in examining modern popular narratives.

Previous research also emphasizes that detective formulas can be reshaped through the presence of female detective figures, particularly within male-dominated conventions. Fadhila and Adi (2021) conducted a qualitative formula analysis to explore the formation of women detectives in Tana French's *Dublin Murder Squad Series* in relation to hard-boiled conventions. The study aimed to analyze how female detectives challenge masculine detective traditions.

The findings revealed that French reconstructs hard-boiled conventions by expanding marginality into issues of gender and race, replacing masculine toughness with resistance to patriarchal control, and presenting a feminine path to justice. This study is relevant because it demonstrates how formula conventions can be transformed through gendered characterization and ideological shifts.

In addition to formula-based studies, other scholarship examines the broader historical development of female investigator tropes in detective fiction. Farah (2019) conducted a qualitative study on the representation of female investigators in detective fiction. The study aimed to examine how women have historically been positioned within detective narratives and how contemporary portrayals differ from earlier representations. The findings revealed that female investigators were often marginalized as victims, corpses, or supporting figures in earlier detective fiction, while contemporary narratives increasingly portray women as active detectives who balance rational deduction with methods shaped by social realities. The study also showed that female investigators can function as symbols of protest and social change within patriarchal settings. This study is relevant because it provides a historical and ideological context for understanding why modern female detectives represent both narrative and cultural evolution within detective fiction.

Film studies have also contributed to understanding the female detective figure as a culturally shaped representation that changes over time. Lawlar (2023) examines the historical evolution of female detectives in film, from the

femme fatale of 1940s film noir to contemporary portrayals. The study explains that female detectives were once represented as dangerous women who needed to be contained, whereas contemporary media increasingly portrays them as empowering figures while seeking to disarm traditional stereotypes. This study is relevant because it strengthens the theoretical background for analyzing Enola Holmes as a modern female detective who challenges conventional genre expectations.

More recent research has directly examined Enola Holmes in relation to feminism and gender representation in detective narratives. Dalimunte et al. (2025) conducted a qualitative study using feminist stylistics theory to analyze gender representation in *Enola Holmes 2*. The study aimed to identify how language and discourse patterns reflect gender roles within investigative narratives. The findings showed that male characters were still more frequently positioned in professional and investigative roles despite the feminist-centered narrative of the film. This study is relevant because it demonstrates that the Enola Holmes franchise can be analyzed through gender-focused frameworks and supports the importance of examining female-centered detective narratives.

Although the studies above provide important insights into detective fiction, gender representation, and female detective figures, limited research has specifically examined contemporary detective films through structural analysis based on detective fiction conventions. In particular, few studies focus on how detective fiction formulas are constructed and modified. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how Enola Holmes (2020) constructs

and modifies detective fiction formulas through the portrayal of a young female detective in a contemporary context.

C. Theoretical Framework

This section outlines the theoretical foundation used in this research, which consists of two main interconnected concepts: popular literature and formula theory. These concepts provide the basis for analyzing how *Enola Holmes* (2020), as a popular film text, constructs and potentially modifies the detective fiction formula through its narrative development and characterization.

First, popular literature refers to literary and media works that are widely consumed by the public and are generally shaped by audience expectations and genre conventions. Such works reflect dominant cultural values and frequently employ recurring narrative patterns that become familiar across time. As a popular film, *Enola Holmes* (2020) can be examined as a cultural text that both reflects and responds to contemporary social values, particularly through its portrayal of a female-centered detective narrative.

Second, this study employs the detective fiction framework proposed by Scaggs (2005) as the primary analytical lens. Drawing on this discussion, the present study organizes the analysis into five categories: crime or mystery, detective figure, investigation, clues and suspense, and resolution. In this research, Scaggs' framework is applied to examine how *Enola Holmes* (2020) constructs its detective fiction plot structure and whether it maintains or modifies conventional genre expectations through its young female detective protagonist.

To clarify the relationship between these theoretical components and their application in this study, Figure 2.1 presents the structure of the theoretical framework used in this research.

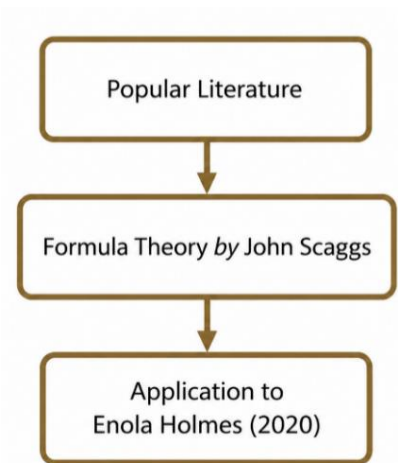


Figure 2. 1 The Theoretical Framework

Figure 2.1 illustrates the theoretical framework of this research. The framework begins with popular literature as the broader field that provides the foundation for analyzing *Enola Holmes* (2020) as a widely consumed cultural text. It then moves to the detective fiction framework proposed by Scaggs (2005), which conceptualizes detective fiction through key plot elements such as crime or mystery, detective figure, investigation process, clues and suspense, and resolution. These elements serve as the analytical basis for examining how the film constructs its detective plot structure. Through this framework, the research evaluates whether *Enola Holmes* (2020) maintains conventional detective fiction patterns or modifies them through the portrayal of a young female detective in a contemporary context.